THE Indecency and Unlawfulness OF Baptizing Children IN PRIVATE, Without Necessity, and with the Publick Form.

Seriously recommended to the Consideration of both the Clergy and Laity of the Church of *England*.

By *Martin Strong*, M. A. and Vicar of *Yeovill* in *Somersetshire*.

To which is added, A brief Exhortation to the constant Receiving of the Lords Supper.

Let all things be done decently, and in Order, 1 Cor. 14. 40.

Administrari debent Sacramenta Cœlu Ecclesiæ & non alibi; quando scilicet congregata est tota Ecclesia, vel illius pars magna, non Extra Cœlum Ecclesiæ. Gul. Bucani Instit. Theol. p. 607.

LONDON, Printed for *Tho. Bennet* at the *Half-Moon* in St. *Paul's Church-yard*, 1692.

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Subjoined, A brief Exhortation to the [illegible] Receiving of the Lord's Supper.

[illegible]

Adminstrator [illegible] *Cum Eccles.* [illegible] *Cum Eccles.* [illegible]

LONDON, [illegible] *Bear* at the [illegible] *Church-yard*, 1692.

TO MY

Honoured Friend and Patron

Sir *EDWARD PHELIPPS*,

Of *MONTACUTE*.

Honoured Sir,

I need not make Apologies for *devoting* the enſuing Papers to your *Patronage*; The *triſle* I confeſs is too mean to be preſented to ſo great a Name, but yet not to have done it, would have been both *Ungrateful* and *Unjuſt*. For 'twas compoſed for the benefit of a place, in which I am now happily fixed by your *generous* and *uncorrupted Charity*, and in beſtowing of which, you made no other *demands*, beſide a promiſe under my hand of *living* on the *place*, and taking *care* of the *People*. So far were you from making *Merchandiſe* of Souls, that you eſteem'd your right of Patronage only as a *ſacred truſt*, for which you muſt give account to Almighty God; And may this pious Example never want its followers. I deſire that this *Dedication* may remain as a laſt-

ing Monument of my Gratitude, tho I am very sensible it does not *lessen*, but *add* to my obligations; for the prefixing of your Name to this little *Treatise*, will, I doubt not, supply the *want* of a *Character* in its Author, and make it the more acceptable to the World.

May all the Blessings of Heaven attend your Person, your Vertuous Lady, and every member of yonr Family; May your *Unwearied Assiduity* in serving your Country never want encouragment; May you continually enjoy the *Advantages* of doing good *here* on Earth, and receive a glorious reward for all in a *better World*. These, Sir, shall be the constant Prayers of

Your most Obliged Humble Servant,

M. Strong.

To my Beloved Parishioners
THE
Inhabitants of YEOVIL.

My Dear Neighbours,

THE *design of this little Book is purely to reform (if possible) a* Bad Custom, *which has too long prevailed among you, I mean,* The Baptizing of your Children in Private, *without Necessity and* with the Publick Form; *You all know I have already from the Pulpit told you both of the* Indecency *and* Unlawfulness *of this Practice, and solemnly protested to you that these were the only reasons that prevailed with me not to comply with it; After all which I could not but hope, that you would have granted the request I then made to you, and not have pressed me any more to do a thing, which I had so evidently proved, to be against both* your duty *and* my own. *But to my great concern I have found it otherwise.*

In my own Vindication therefore, as well as for your Satisfaction, I have now committed what I formerly Preached, *to the* Press, *with such* additions *and* alterations, *as I thought necessary to make it fit for a Publick view: And that I might not be wanting in any part of my duty to you, I have printed these Papers to attend you at your houses; hoping by this means to remove those* mistakes *and* prejudices *which* some *of you may have entertained in this matter, and to convince you fully, that the thing I* here *argue against, is really an* Errour: *Nor should any thing less than this* unhappy necessity, *have ever tempted me to appear in Print.*

In the management of this Argument, I have endeavoured to be both as Brief *and* Plain *as possible, to set every thing in a clear and convincing light, and to come down to the meanest Understanding; which I desire the Reader in general to remember, and then I need not make Apologies for the Style, which might easily have been of another nature, but I was to consult* chiefly *the capacities of my own People, and in a matter*

ter of Universal concern, I was willing All might understand me. As for other imperfections, they may justly be imputed to my multiplicity of business, diversions, and avocations in a large and populous Town; I am conscious enough how many they are, but yet I have this satisfaction, that these papers had (at least as was protested) the Undissembled approbation of a worthy and judicious Friend, a person of a considerable Character and Authority in the Church; for whose particular favours, I cannot but take this occasion of making a publick and grateful acknowledgment.

And now (Neighbours) I have only one thing to desire of you; that in reading this discourse you would consider every thing calmly and impartially, without passion, humour, or prejudice; Read it with that simplicity and indifferency of mind, that becomes humble, teachable and Charitable Christians; Do not Nickname or misconstrue, what is by me well intended. Almighty God, the searcher of hearts, knows that I aim at nothing but your benefit, and Conviction: I have worded every thing after the mildest and most inoffensive manner I was able; If any thing seem closely or severely spoken, 'tis no more than what I thought absolutely necessary for the exposing of the weakness of those objections, which are usually urged in justification of what I here oppose; And after all, if you find that the Arguments here insisted on, are such as cannot be answered, then as you love your own Souls, let me beseech you not wilfully to resist the truth, but be glad and thankful rather, that you are freed from your mistakes.

I have added at the end, a Brief Exhortation to the constant receiving of the Lord's Supper, which is a duty too much neglected amongst you, as well as in other places. In return for all which I desire nothing but your Prayers, as you ever have mine. And God Almighty follow you all with his Blessings, and give you hearts willing both to learn and obey the truth.

Your Sincere Friend and Servant,

M. Stong.

The Indecency and Unlawfulneſs of Baptizing Children in Private, without Neceſſity, and with the Publick Form, &c.

'TIS a ſtrange prevailing power that *Cuſtom* has upon the minds of all mankind; The very *Cuſtom* and *Commonneſs* of dying, ſeems to have taken off the thoughts of death from the World; *Manna* itſelf was ſlighted when 'twas rained down every day; And that moſt ſacred and venerable rite of Chriſtianity, the bleſſed *Sacrament* itſelf, by being *daily* adminiſtred in the Primitive Church, in a little time began to be deſpis'd: And be the thing never ſo apparently *vicious*, or evidently *unlawful*, yet ſuch is the bewitching force of an habitual *Cuſtomary* Practice, that it hinders men from perceiving it, and begets ſuch inveterate *prejudices* in their minds, as *darken* the *Reaſon*, and *corrupt* the *Judgment*, and bear down the force of the ſtrongeſt *Arguments*, and of the moſt convincing *Reaſons* in the World.

Nothing but *This* could poſſibly have prevailed with ſo many members even of our own Communion, to perſevere ſo obſtinately in Baptizing their Children in *Private houſes*, *without* any juſt Neceſſity, and *with the Publick Form*; a *Cuſtom* confeſſedly *Indecent*, and undeniably *Unlawful*; That it is ſo, is the deſign of this following *Treatiſe* to evince; and I hope to do it *Unanſwerably*, by inſiſting on theſe ſeveral Arguments.

1. That the Baptizing Children in Private houſes, is contrary to the nature and deſign of Chriſtian Baptiſm.

2. 'Tis contrary to the conſtant and univerſal Practice of the Catholick Chriſtian Church in all ages.

3. 'Tis contrary to the expreſs Laws and Rubrick of our own eſtabliſhed National Church of *England*.

4. 'Tis contrary to every Miniſters ſolemn Promiſes and Subſcriptions. And

5. 'Tis Abſurd, and Irrational. If I can prove beyond denial theſe ſeveral Aſſertions, I hope it will be granted, that I have ſufficiently performed my promiſed Undertaking, and that I had good reaſon for refuſing to comply with this *Illegal* Cuſtom.

But

But to prevent all mistakes, it must be remembred, that Exception and Allowance is still to be made for the Case of *invincible* Necessity, of extreme Sickness, and danger of Death; at which time the Church admits of *Private Baptism*, and has composed a particular Form for that purpose; of which I shall say more in its proper place. This being premised, I assert

First, That the Administration of Baptism in Private houses, is contrary to the *Nature* and *Designs* of Baptism; for Baptism is a great and most solemn part of Gods Publick Worship; 'Tis that Divine Sacrament by which we are entred and admitted into the Christian Church and Covenant, by which we are made members of that *Holy Catholick Church*, and united to that *Communion* of *Saints*, and common Society of Christians, which makes one fundamental Article of our Creed. Baptism is also an open and solemn profession of our belief in the Sacred Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in whose names we are Baptized; but especially 'tis a Publick declaration of our Faith in *Jesus* the *Mediator*, an open acknowledgment to all the Woald that we heartily embrace that Gospel and Religion, which Christ reveal'd from his Father to mankind, and which distinguishes us from *Jews*, and *Mahometans*, and all other Religions in the World. For this reason 'twas, that the Font was always placed near the door or entrance into the Church, to signifie to us that 'tis by Baptism we are first entred into the Christian Faith, into the Religion and Church of Christ. Now all this evidently proves, that Baptism is not of a *Private*, but of a *Publick* Nature, and that its ends and designs are *Publick*; And from hence it as evidently follows, that it ought to be administred *according* to its *Nature*, that is, not *Privately*, but in the *Publick* Assembly and Congregation of Christians.

Vid. *Dr.* Patricks Aqua Genitalis

See Dr. Sherlocks *Rel. Assemb.* p. 291.

The force and reason of this Argument is plainly founded upon that Apostolical precept, 1 Cor. 14. 40. *Let all things be done decently, and in order.* If this be Scripture, and the word of God, it certainly obliges us, to perform all the Sacred and *Publick* offices of our Religion, with all that *Decency*, and *Solemnity*, that the *Nature* of the things, and the *Majesty* of God requires. In this sense the most learned *Commentators* understand the words; Nor can any other interpretation be put upon them, without offering a manifest violence to the design of the Apostle throughout that whole Chapter, which was to correct *abuses* and *indecencies* in the service of God, and to give such standing rules and general directions, as he thought necessary to be observed

εὐσχημόνως καὶ τάξει.

in

in Gods Publick worſhip by all Chriſtian Congregations. This being granted, I now appeal to the ſenſe and reaſon of all the world, whether it be not more for the *Decency* and *Solemnity* of Chriſtian Baptiſm, to be adminiſtred in the *Church* and Houſe of God, than in a *Private* room of common and ordinary uſe? The Sacraments of our Religion are certainly the moſt ſolemn parts of it; We admit but *two* of theſe, and Baptiſm is *one*; And does it not beſt agree with the ſolemn Nature of this Sacrament, that it ſhould be Adminiſtred in the ſolemn place of Gods worſhip? Since Baptiſm is an *open* profeſſion of our Faith in Chriſt, how can this be duly performed in *Private*, or any where out of the *Publick* Aſſemblies of Chriſtians? And ſince Baptiſm is deſigned to enter and admit us into the Church, what place can be ſo decent for its Adminiſtration, as the Church? To this purpoſe we have Dr. *Burnet* telling us, 'That Baptiſm being the 'Admiſſion of a New Member to the Church, 'tis moſt ſuita-'ble to the deſign of Baptiſm, to do it before the whole Congre-'gation; and withal adds. that the Liberty of baptizing in Pri-'vate, which was at firſt indulged by the Church, only as a pro-'viſion for Weakneſs, is ſince become a *Mark* of *Vanity*, and a 'piece of affected *State*. If Baptiſm be deſigned to make us members of the Chriſtian Church, I would willingly be ſatisfied, how this can be *decently* performed out of the Church, and out of the preſence of the Church; or can any *other* place be ſo fit and convenient for ſo ſacred a thing, as the *Place* that is dedicated and devoted to the ſervice of God? Theſe are *plain* Queſtions I know, but I believe they are *unanſwerable*, and I leave them to the Conſcience of all Unprejudiced Readers; with this ſerious and earneſt Exhortation, *viz.* That they would not look on Baptiſm to be a trifling or inconſiderable thing, as if it were only the giving a *Name* to the Child, and no more; but that they would conſider it, as a moſt ſolemn part of Gods Worſhip, as that *Divine Sacrament*, by which their Children are dedicated to God, and to the Religon of Chriſt; The want of which Conſideration, I am convinced is the cauſe, why ſo many, *otherwiſe good and well meaning*, Perſons, are ſo regardleſs, (provided it be done at all) *how* or *where*, *in what place*, or *after what manner* this ſacred duty is performed.

Hiſt. Reform. Abridged. Lib. 2. p. 63.

I do not ſay that there is any *Poſitive* Holineſs in one place above another, or that the place alone can ſanctify the worſhip performed in it, without other due Qualifications; but this I do affirm, and all the ſober part of Mankind did ever yet grant, that

as there is a *Relative* Holineſs in the Lords day, above other days of the Week, ſo there is at leaſt a *Relative* Holineſs in the Church above other places; both as 'tis ſet apart and conſecrated to the ſervice and worſhip of God, and as Almighty God is more *eſpecially* and *immediately* preſent in it; Upon this account it was, that the pious and Primitive Chriſtians, always paid ſuch an extraordinary Reſpect and Veneration to the public places of Gods Worſhip, both at their firſt Entrance *into*, and all the while they continued *in* them. And for this reaſon 'tis, that the Public place of Gods Worſhip is in Scripture ſet forth by ſo many honourable Names and Titles; ſuch as are, the *Temple*, the *Tabernacle*, and the *Sanctuary of the Lord*; the *Habitation of his Holineſs*, and the *place where his Honor* dwelleth; the *Houſe of Prayer*, and the *Church of God*; All which things put together, do ſtrongly prove, that there is at leaſt a *Relative* holineſs in the Church above other places, and that God is more immediately preſent there, to hear the Petitions, and to anſwer the Prayers of his humble Supplicants, and to give a due vertue and efficacy to his bleſſed Sacraments.

See Dr. Caves Primitive Chr. Chap. 6. Part 1. and Cap. 9.

But leſt I ſhould be thought to be *ſingular* in this opinion, I ſhall beg leave for the ſatisfaction of every *unbyaſs'd* Reader, to tranſcribe the words of a pious and learned Biſhop of this Church; who ſpeaking of the Dedication of Churches and Chappels to Service of God, tells us, 'That our Prayers, and public Services, 'are moſt readily accepted in ſuch holy ſeparate places; and he 'proves it from 2 Chron. 7: 15. *Now mine Eyes ſhall be open, and 'mine Ears attent to the Prayer in this place*; which promiſe of acceptance belongs to any *other* place ſo dedicated and conſecrated 'to Gods holy Worſhip and Service, as was *this* houſe which '*Solomon* built; for the reaſon which God gives of his gracious 'readineſs to hear the Prayer of *that* holy place, is in general '*this*, v. 16. *For now have I choſen and ſanctified this Houſe, that my 'Name might be there for ever*; *Now*, that this houſe is dedicated 'and ſolemnly ſet apart by religious Rites and Prayers to my 'Service, *now* I have choſen it for mine. And a little farther he adds, 'By the like reaſon whatſoever *other* place ſhall be dedi-'cated to him, ſhall have the Eyes of God open, and his Ear 'attentive to the Prayer of it. And God Almighty promiſes as 'much, Exod. 20. 24. *In all places where I record my Name, I will 'come unto thee, and bleſs thee*; *that is*, in *all* places dedicated to 'me, and my Service, and ſo made mine. And a little farther (p. 385.) are theſe *very remarkable* words. 'The Church is the 'moſt

Dr. Sparrow Bp. of Norwich in his Rationale on the Com. Prayer, p. 371.

A quatenus ad omne valet conſequentia.

'moſt convenient place for the ſervice of God, and adds much 'to the beauty of holineſs; And he that ſhould neglect that de- 'cency, and *deſpiſing the Church*, ſhould offer up the *Publick* Wor- 'ſhip (of which we have already proved Baptiſm to be a moſt 'ſolemn part) in *Private*, He would by ſo doing, ſin againſt 'that law of God, that ſays, *Curſed be he that having a better Lamb 'in his flock, offers up to God a worſe*, Mal. 1. 14. For God Al- 'mighty muſt be ſerved with the *beſt* we have, otherwiſe we 'deſpiſe him; 'He that *can* have a *Church*, and will offer up the 'holy Service in a *worſe place*, Let him fear that Curſe.

This I think is home to the purpoſe, and an evident proof of my former aſſertion, from the plaineſt Texts of Scripture; and if it ſeem *ſeverely ſpoken*, let it be remembred that 'tis *ſubſtantially proved*; and that they are not mine, but a *Reverend Prelates* words of this Church, whoſe name and authority ought to be had in veneration by all its members; And would to God thoſe perſons who contend ſo earneſtly for Baptizing their Children at home, without any juſt neceſſity, would conſider ſeriouſly, whether This be not very like that ſin, of *deſpiſing the Church of God*, which St. *Paul* ſo ſeverely condemned in the *Corinthians*, 1 *Ep.* 11. 22. and not only making their own houſes *equal* to the Church, but in this reſpect *preferring* them before it.

Upon the whole of this firſt Argument, I think it is undeniably proved, that Baptiſm is not of a *Private*, but of a *Publick* Nature, and that the Church is the fitteſt and moſt decent place for the Adminiſtration of it; And therefore, that to adminiſter it in *Private* houſes, is both contrary to the *Nature* and *Deſigns* of Baptiſm, and a plain tranſgreſſion of this precept of St. *Paul*, *Let all things be done decently, and in order.*

Secondly, To Adminiſter Baptiſm in Private houſes, is contrary to the conſtant practice of the Catholick Chriſtian Church in all ages? For the proof of this, I cannot take a better Method, than to give you the words of the judicious and learned *Dr. Cave*; who ſpeaking of the place where Baptiſm was *anciently* adminiſtred, tells us, 'That 'twas always as near as 'might be to the place of their *Public* Aſſemblies, and that 'twas 'ſeldom performed without the preſence of the Congregation; 'and that for very good reaſons, both as 'tis a principal act of 'Religious Worſhip, and as 'tis the initiating of Perſons into 'the Church, which therefore ought to be as *Public* as poſſible, 'that ſo the whole Congregation might be Spectators and Wit- 'neſſes, of that Profeſſion and Engagement, which the baptized *Prim. Chriſt. c. 10. p. 311. pars pr.*

'Person then took upon him; And this the Primitive Christi-'ans so zealously kept to, that the *Trullan* Council (*Can.* 59.) 'allows not Baptism to be administred in a Private Chappel or 'Oratory, but only in the Public Churches, punishing the Per-'sons offending in this particular with *Deposition* from their Of-'fice, if they were Clergy-men, and if Laity with *Excommunica-'tion.* For this reason they had their Baptisteria or Fonts, built 'at first in some place near the Church, then in the Church '* Porch, till afterward they were placed in the Church itself. This I think is very plain, and I have chose to transcribe the very words of this reverend and learned Person, because of his great Name and Eminency in the Church, especially as a faithful and diligent Inquirer into the *Customs* and Practice of *Antiquity*, of which this *Book* called *Primitive Christianity*, is, amongst the rest, *One* illustrious proof.

* ἐν προδόροις τῆς εὐσεβείας. Naz.

I was once thinking to add some other Observations of my own relating to this affair, But I *since* find this particular so largely and unanswerably proved by an ingenious Author who has lately writ on this very subject, that, (because I can add nothing new) I think it better to refer the inquisitive Reader thither. The Book is licensed by the *Arch-Bishop*, and dedicated to the *Bishop* of *London*; Of both whose pious Endeavours to reform this *Unlawful Custom*, the Author gives us an account in his *Epistle Dedicatory*; which I observe for this reason; that the Reader may know, that what I *here* write against has been condemned by the *Metropolitan*, and the whole *Church* of *England* in general. Whoever reads this little book from the 5th to the 16th page, will find it undeniably proved, that St. *John* and the Apostles themselves baptized in Public; That both the *Greek* and *Latin* Churches do the same at this day, and that several of the Antient Fathers, and most learned Writers of the Primitive Church, (whose Names are in the Margin) do all contend for Baptism in Public. He will find it proved that the *Baptizing in Private houses*, has been often condemned and prohibited by whole Councils of Bishops. And all this abundantly strengthned by the Testimonies of several other learned Writers, Men of great esteem in their times. After all which I presume we may very justly conclude with the learned Dr. *Sherlock*, 'That 'the Primitive Christians always administred Baptism in *Public* 'places, and in the presence of the Congregation, and never 'allowed of *Private* Baptism, but in danger of Death; And that

Mr. Arwaker's *Dissuasive from Baptizing Children in Private, printed* 1687.

Justini Martyr, Tertullian, St. *Athanasius, Greg. Nazianzen,* St. *Ambrose,* and *Chrysostom,* St. *Cyril.*

Concilium Constans Meldense, & Vernense. Cassander, Hospinian, Chamier, Vasquez, &c. Rel. Assemblys, p. 294.

that the Cuſtom thus continued in all the following Ages.

Now the force of *this* Argument amounts to this; That in all caſes not *poſitively* determined by the Scripture, The Practice of the Primitive Church, is the ſureſt way for us to underſtand the Mind of Chriſt and his Apoſtles. For we cannot but think, that thoſe who convers'd with the Apoſtles, and with the Apoſtolical men of the next ages, are the ſafeſt guides for us to be directed by, who live ſo remote from thoſe times. The Authority of *Antient* and *Univerſal Tradition*, has always been eſteemed ſacred and venerable, and whatever men may think *now*, yet to contradict the concurring Teſtimony and Practice of the Univerſal Church, was *heretofore* always thought, one of the greateſt Sins and Follies, that a Man could be guilty of. The Fathers themſelves do often confute the Heretics of their times from preſcription, or the conſtant Traditionary *Faith* and *Practice* of the Church. For tho we do not make Tradition to be a *Primary* and Infallible Rule, as the Holy Oracles are; Yet, where the thing is doubtful or diſputable, where the Scripture is ſilent, there certainly the received Practice of the *ancient Univerſal* Church, is the ſureſt guide for us to follow. There is an Obligation upon us of the preſent times; to conform, as much as may be, to the *Practice* of the Univerſal Church, and to avoid *Novelty*, and *Singularity* in all things relating to the Worſhip of God; And therefore when we have ſo many plain Teſtimonies of Antiquity for baptizing in Public, and can find no one Church in the Chriſtian World that ever practiſed otherwiſe; when we have ſo many Ancient Fathers, Councils, and learned Writers, condemning Private Baptiſm, and pleading for that which is Public, and not any one ſingle Author produced of a contrary perſuaſion; There is certainly ſo much reſpect due to this *Unanimous Conſent* of all our *Pious Anceſtors*, as proves it, to be very *rude*, *indecent*, and *immodeſt* for us of the preſent age, to contradict the general ſenſe of Chriſtianity, to affront and condemn the Holy Catholic Church of Chriſt, by our contrary Practices, and to think our ſelves wiſer than all the Chriſtians that went before us; who for 1600 years together, have always Baptized in *Public*, and no doubt for good reaſons.

Thirdly, The Adminiſtration of Baptiſm in Private houſes, without juſt Neceſſity, and with the Public Form, is contrary to the Expreſs *Laws* and *Rubrick* of our own National eſtabliſhed Church of *England*. This is ſo plain and undeniable a Truth, that a modeſt man would think it needleſs to go about to prove

it

it, to any man who has got a Common-prayer book, and is but able to read the Rubrick without *coloured Spectacles*; which is as plain, and expreſs in this particular, as words can make it. For

1ſt. The very appointing of two diſtinct Offices, and the calling one of them by the Name of *Public*, and the other by the Name of *Private Baptiſm*, is a plain demonſtration of the mind of the Church in this reſpect. For to what purpoſe has the Church compoſed a *diſtinct* Form of Baptiſm for caſes of ſickneſs and extreme Neceſſity, if ſhe had ever thought that the Public Form might have been *then* uſed as well? But let us examine the ſeveral Titles of thoſe two Offices; And the firſt we find is called, *The Public Baptiſm of Infants, to be uſed in the Church*; Now the very word, *Public*, proves that 'twas never intended to be uſed *Privately*; And the addition of that Clauſe, *To be uſed in the Church*, is an unanſwerable Argument, that it ought not to be uſed in *Private* houſes. But let us proceed from the *Title* to the *Rubrick* for *Public Baptiſm*; And the firſt thing we meet with is This.

'The People are to be admoniſhed that 'tis moſt convenient 'that Baptiſm ſhould not be adminiſtred, but upon Sundays and 'other Holy-days, when the moſt number of People come to-'gether. And this our Church requires for two very good reaſons, which immediately follow; both which reaſons conclude ſtrongly for *Public*, and againſt *Private* Baptiſm. The firſt is

'That the Congregation there preſent, may teſtify the re-'ceiving of them that be newly baptized, into the number of 'Chriſts Church. The ſecond is

'That by the Baptiſm of the Infant in the Church, every 'Perſon preſent may be put in mind of his own ſolemn vow and 'profeſſion made to God in his own Baptiſm. To this purpoſe the learned Dr. *Comber* tells us, 'That Infants ought to be 'brought to the Church, that there may be many Witneſſes of 'this ſolemn act, and that *others* may be put in mind of their 'Vow, as alſo becauſe they may be admitted Members of our 'Religious Aſſemblies in the *proper* place. And he that has a mind to ſee farther, how much Public Baptiſm tends to the Edification of the Church, Let him read Dr. *Sherlocks Rel. Aſſemblies* p. 293. and conſider withal, how the Cuſtom of Baptizing in Private can be reconciled with that Precept of St. *Paul* 1 *Cor.* 14. 26. *Let all things be done to Edifying*; that is, in all acts of Pub-

Diſcourſe upon the whole Common Prayer. p. 338.

πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν

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lic Worſhip, let every thing be ſo performed, as may tend moſt to the benefit and advantage of others; which is the Paraphraſe of a very learned man on the words. Dr. *Hammond in locum*, and Dr. *Beveridge* his Sermons on this Text.

In the third Section or Paragraph of the Rubrick before Public Baptiſm, 'The Godfathers, and Godmothers, and the 'People with the Children are required to be ready at the *Font*; Now, I hope, this may paſs for a plain Command for the bringing of Children to the Church; for where elſe is the *Font*? Are there any in *Private* houſes? Or how can Children be brought to the *Font*, if they are not firſt brought to the *Church*, where *alone* the *Font* is placed? But this is not all, the *time* is alſo ſpecified as well as the Place; 'The Children are to be 'ready at the Font immediately after the ſecond Leſſon at 'Morning or Evening Prayer, which ſtill farther concludes for its being nthe Church, where *alone* the *Prayers* and *Leſſons* are uſually read; And all this is abundantly confirmed by that which follows, *viz.* *And the Prieſt ſtanding there, at the Font, ſhall ſay*, &c. So far I think nothing can be more plain or undeniable. But let us go on to the *Office* for *Private Baptiſm of Children in houſes*, for ſo 'tis called.

The very *Name* or *Title* of which, is enough to ſatisfy any ſober man, that this *alone*, and not the *Public Form* is to be uſed in *Houſes*. But the Rubrick is more expreſs.

'There in the 2d Paragraph, the Curates or Miniſters of every 'Pariſh are required often to admoniſh and warn the People, 'that without great Cauſe and Neceſſity, to be approved by the 'Curates themſelves, they procure not their Children to be baptized at home; And in Obedience to this *Command* of the Church, I do now deſire and beſeech you of my Care not to do it; But when need ſhall compel, then the Rubrick expreſly orders, that Baptiſm be adminiſtred on *This Faſhion*, namely by that Form of *Private* Baptiſm, which there follows, and not by the *Publick* Form.

So that, as the *Ancient* Church never did, ſo neither does the *Preſent* Church of *England* allow of any *Private Baptiſm*, except in danger of death; and in ſuch a caſe ſhe has provided a Form for that purpoſe, and required the uſe of that alone. And upon the whole, I think it undeniably follows, that To Baptize Children in *Private*, with the *Publick* Form, and without *juſt Neceſſity*, is, (as Dr. *Sherlock* tells us, *Rel. Aſſemblies p.* 295.) 'a plain 'tranſgreſſion of the *Rule*, and therefore ſuch a diſorder, as no 'man ſhould be guilty of, who profeſſes himſelf a Member of 'our

'our Church; 'Tis a plain breach of the expreſs *Laws* and *Com-*
'*mands* of our own *Communion*, which was the thing to be
'proved.

Now as for this Argument, it equally concerns all in general, who own themſelves of the Church of *England*, *Rich* and *Poor*, *Laity*, as well as *Clergy*. For by the 20th Article of our Church, we all profeſs to believe, 'That the Church has full power to 'decree and command all ſuch Rites and Ceremonies, as are not 'contrary to the word of God; Nor did ever any yet deny this power, but thoſe who were profeſſed Diſſenters from us, and againſt them it has been *largely*, and *unanſwerably* proved, by many learned Divines of this Church, whoſe Names I have ſet in the Margin, if any one pleaſe to conſult them.

By Dr. Stillingfleet *Unreaſonab. of Separation. Dr.* Sherlock *in his Vindication of that book; and in his Anſwer to the Proteſtant Reconciler.*
By Dr. Goodman *in his Compaſſ. Enquiry.*
By Dr. Scot, *Chriſtian Life, Part 2. Vol. 2. p. 433.*
And inſtead of all by the Venerable Hooker *Eccl. Polity, Lib. 3. and others.*

Now then, thus I argue; if the Church has Power to make Laws in things indifferent, and not forbidden by the Scriptures, it hence neceſſarily follows, that 'tis our abſolute duty to obey and ſubmit to thoſe Laws, when once they are made: For a *Power* to *Command*, neceſſarily infers the *duty* of *Obedience*, theſe are *Relative* things, the *one* of which unavoidably follows from the *other*; Nor can we *diſobey* the *Lawful* Commands of the Church, without *diſobeying Heaven* at the ſame time, and Chriſt Jeſus himſelf, from whom, as from a Supream Head, the Church has received this *Legiſlative* Power; and how then can it become any true Member of the Church, to be thus *wilfully* guilty of trangreſſing its plaineſt Laws? Or why ſhould any pious and genuine Son of the Church, carry himſelf thus refractory to his ſpiritual Mother? Or can there be any thing more *abſurd*, than to profeſs to believe, *that the Church has Power to make Laws in indifferent things*, and yet whenever thoſe *Laws* come to be *obeyed*, to *diſpute*, and *deny* its Authority? Eſpecially conſidering, how pious and primitive a duty this is, and what great reaſon the Church has to require it. This certainly is not to *do things according to Order*, that is (as the great Dr. *Hammond* tells us upon the place) *According to the Order and Direction of the Church.* I know not what low thoughts men may *now* have of this Diſobedience, But I am ſure the pious Dr. *Sherlock* had another ſenſe of things, when he made *this* a part of his Form of Confeſſion of Sin.

Dr. Rich. Sherlocks *Practical Chriſtian*, p. 85

'I have not made Conſcience to obey the Laws and Orders 'of thy Church, whether Univerſal or particular, not acknowledging

'ledging or submitting to the Authority of Either; and I am 'justly therefore to be rankt amongst Publicans and Sinners.

'My Ghostly Fathers and Pastors, in the several orders of 'Bishop, Priest and Deacon, I have disbelieved, disrespected, 'disobeyed, in their Callings, in their Admonitions for my 'Souls health. I have hated him that reproveth in the Gate, I 'have hardned my heart, and refused when admonished, to re-'turn from the Errour of my ways.

Nor is this a Law of the *Church* only, but of the *Civil State* too, The whole Rubrick is confirmed by *Act* of *Parliament*, as well as by *Convocation*; and the Act of Uniformity before our *Common Prayer Books*, expresly injoyns under the severest Penalty, that *No other Form of Prayer or Administration of the Sacraments be used, beside that which is set forth and allowed by that Book.* So that whoever refuses Obedience to those Laws of the *Church* concerning Baptism, does at the same time disobey a Law of the *State* too, his *Civil* as well as his *Spiritual* Parents and Governors; and if this be not a plain Breach of the fifth Commandment, Let every mans Conscience judge.

There is, I foresee, one *fond* pretence, that may possibly be return'd to this Argument, and that is the *present Act of Toleration*, or *Liberty of Conscience*, which may be thought to discharge the *Duty* of *Obedience* to the Established Laws of the Church. But in answer to this vain Cavil, I say,

First, That I write not at present to those who are *Dissenters* from the Church, but to those who profess themselves *Members* of our own Communion; and what have such to do with the *Toleration?* Let the Act it self be read, and 'twill appear that the *Toleration* was intended only for the Ease of those few (for I verily believe they are not many) who are *sincerely* persuaded in their Consciences, that 'tis not *Lawful* for them to *obey* the Orders, or joyn in the Worship of the *Established* Religion; Now whatever service the Plea of a *Toleration* may do such mistaken Persons, yet certainly it looks very unaccountable in one of our *own Communion*, to make this pretence in excuse for *his* Disobedience to *those Laws*, and to *that Constitution*, to which he himself belongs. I envy no man the *Liberty of Conscience*; My Charity is Universal, I heartily wish well to, and pray for all the World; But the *Toleration* is for *Dissenters*, not for us; We have still (blessed be God) the same Church, the same Public Liturgy, the same Articles, Canons, and Constitutions established by the

Law of the Land, by several Acts of Parliament which stand yet unrepealed; And therefore *our Obedience* is still as due to those Laws, as ever; Nor can the *Toleration* with any shew of Modesty or Reason be thought to excuse *us*, so long as we own our selves *Members* of the *Church* of *England*, as of a *good* and an *Orthodox Communion*. But suppose I were concern'd with a *professed Dissenter*, yet I might justly answer,

2. That all that any *Toleration* in the World *does*, or can do, is to excuse only from the *Penalty*, not at all from the *fault* of Disobedience to the Laws and Orders, of an *Established Lawful* Communion; it gives a Liberty of *Impunity* 'tis true, (whether *justly* or *unjustly* I will not now dispute) but not of *justification*; it takes away the *civil Punishment*, but it can never take away the *Sin* of Non-conformity or Disobedience; my reason for it is this, because *these* are Sins forbidden by the plain Laws of God, which no Laws of Man can alter or dispense with. For every *Orthodox* and *lawfully constituted* Church, has a full power from *Christs* own *Institution*, to make Canons and Constitutions for its own Regulation, for the security and preservation of its own Peace and good Order; And this lays a sufficient Obligation on all Christians to obey those Laws, tho there should be no *Civil Authority* to back and enforce them; The *Church*, considered as a *Church*, is a *distinct* body, and has a *distinct* Government inherent in it self, without any regard had to the *State*; And consequently all disobedience to the Lawful Commands of the Church, is an Evil in it self, *Morally* and *intrinsecally* sinful, and therefore can never be altered by any *Humane* Dispensation or Toleration. Hence we find the Primitive Christians decrying *Schism*, and branding it with the most odious Characters, before there were any *Civil* Laws in *Defence* of Christianity, nay when all the *Civil* Laws were *against* it; as well *before* the Empire became Christian, and again in the intervals of Persecution, as when Christianity was *Established* by a Law. So the *Donatists* were accounted *Schismaticks* by the Primitive Christians, as well under those *temporal* Princes that *favoured*, as under those who *persecuted* them; *Arianism* was condemned as well under *Constantius* and *Valens*, who *countenanced*, as under *Constantine* who *opposed* it; so that tho a Toleration do take away *Civil Penalties*, yet the Laws of God, and of Scripture that require *Unity*, *Communion* and *Compliance* with an established *Orthodox* Church, do stand still uncancell'd, and in as much force as ever. If any one doubt the truth

of

of this, Let him only read the ingenious Mr *Norris* his *Charge of Schism continued*, and if he can *fairly* answer what that *learned Author* there urges, in defence of this Assertion, I promise him I will instantly give up the Cause, and become his Proselite.

There is a passage in the learned Dr. *Stillingfleets* Sermon of the *Mischief of Separation*, so *apposite* to our present Argument, that I cannot forbear setting it down; 'Tis Page the 45th, in these words; 'Let us who continue in the Communion of our 'Church, *walk by the same Rule and mind the same things*; While 'we keep to *one Rule*, all People know what it is to be of our 'Church; if men set up their *own Fancies* above the Rule, they 'charge it with *Imperfection*; if they do not *obey* the Rule, they 'make themselves wiser than those that made it; It hath not been 'the *Doctrine* or *Rules* of our *Church*, which have ever given ad-'vantage to the Enemies of it, but the *Indiscretion* of some, in 'going *beyond* them, and the *Inconstancy* of others, in not *holding* 'to them. This being the Judgment and Opinion of so great a man, and of so *pacifick* a Temper, deserves a serious Consideration, by all who wish well to the *Church* of *England*.

4. The Baptizing Children in *Private*, by the *Public* Form, is contrary to every Ministers solemn *Promises* and *Subscriptions*; For by the 36th *Canon* of our Church, Every Minister is required, both at his receiving of Orders, and at his Admission to any *Benefice* or *Living*, to make this Promise, and to subscribe it with his own hand, in these very words, *viz. That he himself will use the Form prescribed in the book of Common Prayer, both in Public Prayer, and in the Administration of the Sacraments, and none other.* And now I appeal to the sense of all the world, whether that Minister who uses that Form of *Public* Baptism in *Private* Houses, which is *prescribed* to be used in the *Church*, does not break this Promise; And whether he who does *not* in *Private* houses, use the Form *Prescribed* for that purpose, does not do the same? Does such a Man use the *Form prescribed, by the Book of Common Prayer, and none other*, as he promised, and subscribed? Perhaps it will be said, that he uses the same words, tho in a different Place; But still I answer, That this is not the *Form prescribed by the Book of Common Prayer*; The Form prescribed is perfectly of *Another Nature*; The *Church* has composed two Forms for *Baptism* of Infants; the one for the *Church*, the other for *Private* houses; the one for *ordinary* and common cases, the other for the *extraordinary* cases of sickness, and necessity; Now he that

confounds these two *Offices*, which the Church has made *distinct* and wholy *omitting* that *Form* which is designed for *Private*, *Uses* that in *Private*, which is *commanded* to be used in *Public*, that Person does not use *the Form prescribed by the Book of Common Prayer, and none other*, but *perfectly another*, than what is commanded. If any one in the World can deny this assertion, or without *Tricks* and *Fallacies* fairly justify this Practice from *Breach* of *Promise*, I will never more trust my discursive Faculty so long as I live; can any thing be more *indisputably* clear? If to doubt in this case, be not to *seek Knots in a Bulrush*, I know not what is.

This Argument very nearly concerns us of the *Clergy*, and we should all do well seriously to consider it; and the rather, because our own *undue* Compliances in this respect, are made use of by the *Laity*, as the greatest Argument for the Continuance of this *Unlawful* Practice. But if the most solemn *Promises*, and repeated *Subscriptions* signify any thing, we are all certainly bound to do our utmost for the reforming of this *unhappy* Custom; in doing of which there would be far less difficulty than now there is, were we our selves *Unanimous* in the Attempt, were we *All* resolved to be just to our own Engagements, and would not undermine each others Endeavours, by our *contrary* Practices. 'Tis plain, we are not left at Liberty to do as we please in this case; we are bound by Laws, by Promises and Subscriptions; And when the Laity know and consider this, I cannot but hope, that they will think the *better*, and not the *worse* of us, for being just to our Rule, and true to our Promises; Nor will they be so unreasonable as to expect our compliance in a thing so *manifestly unlawful*; Much less conceive any *Pet* or *Prejudice* against us, only because we cannot make the plainest Laws of the *Church*, and our own Promises too, bend and bow to their humors. And since the *London* Clergies Practice, is most taken notice of in this affair, it would be happy if they would joyn with us, in this Reformation.

5. The Form of Public Baptism is so composed, that it cannot be used in Private Houses, without manifest Absurdities, which is another demonstration that the Church never intended it should be so used. The forementioned Mr *Arwaker* reckons up *four* several instances of this Nature in the Office of Public Baptism, where he that has a mind may see them (*pag.* 29.) I shall only mention *One* at present, and that is in the Preface to the Baptismal Covenant, in these words —— *Dearly beloved, Ye have brought*

brought this Child here to be Baptized. How can *this* be truly or rationally ſpoken, when inſtead of the *Childs* being *brought* by the Sureties, the *Miniſter* himſelf comes home to the houſe, and is *brought* into the very *Chamber* were the *Child* was born? We have already proved that the *Church* at the beginning of this Office requires the Child to be brought to the *Font*, and that the Prieſt ſtanding at the *Font* ſhall ſay—From whence 'tis manifeſt, that by the word (*Here*) in this place, is meant the *Church* where alone the *Font* ſtands; And how then can the *Miniſter* in the very place where the *Child* was born, ſay to the Sureties, *Ye have brought this Child here* (viz. *to the Font*) *to be Baptized:* Or ought he not rather to alter the words to a quite contrary ſenſe, and ſay, *Ye have brought me here to baptize this Child*, For *this* is true, and proper, but the *former* is evidently falſe and abſurd; and the Abſurdity is ſo plain, that I am verily perſwaded, that he that does not perceive it, 'Tis not becauſe He cannot, but becauſe He *will not* underſtand it. Now whether it becomes either Miniſter or People to uſe ſuch groſs *Abſurdities* in ſo ſolemn a part of Gods ſacred Worſhip, is a Queſtion, to which I would beg a ſerious Anſwer.

There is the ſame *Abſurdity* in the Office for *Churching Women*, when 'tis uſed in *Private houſes*; The very Title proves this Practice to be *abſurd*; It ought to be called *Chambering* or *Houſeing* of Women, But *Churching* of them it can never be in any place *out of the Church*. But not to inſiſt on that, the Rubrick before this Office ſays, *The Woman ſhall come into the Church, decently apparalled, and there ſhall kneel down in ſome convenient Place*, &c. than which, no command can be more plain; The Rubrick at the End of the Office, directs the Woman, *to receive the Holy Communion, if there be any*, which ſtill farther argues it to be done in the Church; and the laſt Verſe of the Pſalm appointed to be read in this Office, makes the Abſurdity undeniable: 'Tis this, *I will pay my Vows now —— In the Courts of the Lords houſe*; How can *this* be ſaid in any Private Chamber? Was ever any Place beſide the *Church*, called *the Lords houſe?* Or can any other Place be ſo called, without a manifeſt and daring Abſurdity? An Abſurdity too groſs to be offer'd to the great God in return for a Mercy, which deſerves not only a *Private* Acknowledgment, but a moſt ſolemn Thankſgiving, in the *Public* Aſſembly of Chriſtians; which is both a *greater Honour*, and more *acceptable* to God, than any *Private* returns can be.

See Bp. *Sparrow* and Dr. *Comber* on this Office.

And

And now a modeſt man would think, that after all this, there ſhould be no poſſible *Objections*, againſt ſo *undeniable* a truth; Dr. *Sherlock* tells us (*Rel. Aſſemb. p.* 290.) 'That he could never hear 'any thing that deſerved a ſerious Anſwer: But leſt the Pretences ſhould be thought unanſwerable, let us hear what they are.

And the firſt grand Pretence is *Cuſtom*; 'Tis objected to us, that 'tis generally practiſed in moſt parts of the Kingdom; and by many great and eminent *Divines* of the City of *London* too, and therefore why may it not be continued? This Objection, tho it make a great deal of Noiſe, yet it ſignifies juſt nothing, as will be evident to any one, that conſiders theſe things.

Firſt, That however prevailing this *Cuſtom* now is, yet 'tis but of very late date, even in this Church; Dr *Sherlock* tells us (*Rel. Aſſemb.* p. 290) That this unhappy *Cuſtom*, was begun by as unhappy a Cauſe; Namely by our late *Civil Wars*, and a tyrannical Uſurpation; When our Laws were all ſubverted, and our Religion ruined; When the Orthodox Clergy were all turned a begging, and their Churches uſurped by their Enemies, then 'twas that the Loyal Party, being firſt *baniſhed* from the Church, were *forced* and *compelled* to Baptize their Children in their own Houſes; There was a *Neceſſity* then of doing it *privately*, or not at all; But this *Neceſſity* is now removed, our Churches now (thanks be to Almighty God) are at Liberty; And therefore this can be no Argument to excuſe us; But it becomes us rather to abhor a Cuſtom brought into the Church by ſuch *Ungodly* means, and to remember that our Forefathers would have been *glad*, and *thankful* too, to have injoyed that Liberty and Priviledge of bringing their Children to the *Church*, which we now deſpiſe.

And yet 'tis very obſervable, that even in thoſe times, when the Common-Prayer Book was aboliſhed, and the Presbyterian *Directory* eſtabliſhed in its room, by what was then called an *Ordinance of Parliament*, *Anno* 1644. Even that very *Directory* expreſly decrees, 'That *Baptiſm is* not *to be adminiſtred in Private places*, 'or privately, *but in the place of Public Worſhip, and in the Face of the* 'Congregation, as may be ſeen (*p.* 19) And this is the more remarkable becauſe the Compilers of this *Directory* do in their Preface declare, that they compoſed and agreed upon it, *after earneſt and frequent calling upon the Name of God, and after much conſultation, not with Fleſh and Blood, but with Gods holy word.*

'Tis

'Tis well known that our Brethren of this Perſwaſion were always great Enemies to all *Needleſs* and *Superſtitious Ceremonies* in the Worſhip of God; from whence I infer, that even in *their Opinion*, The Adminiſtration of Baptiſm in the Public place of Gods Worſhip, is not a *Needleſs Ceremony*, but a *Neceſſary Circumſtance* to the due and decent Performance of that divine *Sacrament*; What their *Practice now* is, it concerns not me to inquire, 'tis plain *This* is their *Rule*, and *This* their *Judgment*.

Secondly, Tho many eminent Divines, and particularly of *London*, do comply with this *Cuſtom*, yet ſome others no leſs eminent refuſe to do it. Dr *Sherlock*, and Mr *Arrowſmith* have both writ expreſly againſt it; And all thoſe who have writ any thing in Defence of the Churches Power to make Laws in things indifferent, have in effect done the ſame; for if the Church has Power to *command*, *with Submiſſion*, it muſt be our duty to *obey*.

Thirdly, Tho this had been a *Cuſtom* of *longer date*, and cauſed by *better means*, yet what ſignifies a *bad* Cuſtom againſt a *known Rule*, and the expreſs Laws of the Church? What Sins, what Errors and Offences may not be juſtified, if *Cuſtom* be allowed as an Arguument for them? So Swearing is a *Cuſtom*, and Drunkenneſs is a *Cuſtom*, and I have known ſome Perſons ſo impudent, as to urge the *Commoneſs* of thoſe crying ſins in their *Defence*. But is it any leſſening of a Sin, that a great many are guilty of it? Certainly he who commanded us *not to follow a Multitude to do Evil*, thought otherwiſe. *Sodom* was deſtroyed, not the *later* but the *ſooner*, for that they were *Univerſally* wicked. I ſhall always be glad to follow a *good Example* in *any Perſon*; but in that which is amiſs, the Greateſt Man in the World ſhall never be the Pattern of my Imitation; I reverence the Perſons, and Writings too of ſeveral *great* and *learned* men, (whoſe *Practice* we are upbraided with in this Particular) as much as any man living; but conſidering what ill uſe is made of their Examples, I heartily wiſh, that they would either joyn with us, in reforming this *bad Cuſtom*, or elſe condeſcend ſo far, as to let us know how it may be juſtified. In ſhort, I think the Queſtion in this caſe, ought to be, whether the Cuſtom of Baptizing Children in *Private*, without *juſt Neceſſity*, and by the *Public Form*, be a *decent*, or *indecent*, a *Lawful*, or *Unlawful* Cuſtom? Now that 'tis both *indecent* and *Unlawful* I have undeniably proved in the foregoing Diſcourſe; And therefore all that can follow, from its being a *Cuſtom*, is only

ly this, that the longer it has been continued, the more has been the fault, and the ſooner it ought to be amended.

We have ſeen how this Cuſtom came firſt to be *introduced*; and 'tis no difficult matter to gueſs at the cauſes of its *Continuance*; Some perhaps have complyed with it, out of an *immoderate* love to their own Eaſe, and an Unwillingneſs to be at the pains and trouble of reforming a bad Cuſtom, tho they knew it to be *illegal*.

Others it may be, have been tempted to it by *Poverty*, which has made them forget the Dignity, and Sacredneſs of the Miniſterial Character, by ſacrificing both their Duty and Promiſes at once to a piece of Gold or Silver, and to be guilty of ſuch *ſordid mercenary* Compliances, as to *ſell their Birth right*, I mean the Dignity of the Prieſthood, *for a Meſs of Pottage*. I wiſh this *thing* called *Intereſt*, has not too much prevailed with ſome, who can pretend no real want of any thing, which makes the crime ſo much the more unpardonable; tho after all it is to be feared, that whatever is thus *unlawfully* got, is no better than (*Aurum Tholoſanum*) *Money put into a Bag with Holes*, and like the Coal which the Eagle ſtole from the Altar, that conſumed both her Neſt, and her young to Aſhes.

Others perhaps have done it, purely out of an *obliging diſpoſition*, and upon *prudential* Conſiderations, thinking it the beſt way to break a bad Cuſtom where they have found it, not *too raſhly*, but *by Degrees*; to lay it aſide by that means, as decently, with as *little* noiſe and diſguſt, and with as *much* ſatisfaction to their Neighbors as poſſible; Hoping by this Condeſcenſion to win their good Opinion, and in time to bring them by thoſe *mild Methods* to a through Conformity to the *Laws* of the *Church*, and their *own* Duty; which was no more than the great St. *Paul* did toward *the Jews*, in laying aſide the old *Moſaical Rites* and *Ceremonies*.

This has been *my own* caſe, and I verily believe the *Caſe* of a great many of my Brethren; And that the continuance of this Unlawful Cuſtom, is to be imputed, *not* to the *Juſtice* of the thing it ſelf, but to ſome *one* or *other* of theſe cauſes. I am fully convinced from hence; becauſe even of thoſe Miniſters, who *do*, or *have* complyed with this Practice, I never could hear any *one* pretend to juſtify it, but frankly confeſs, it ought not to be done. And thus I think I have abundantly anſwered that clamorous Objection from *Cuſtom*, which indeed did not deſerve

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the Expence of so much Ink and Paper, as has been thrown away upon it, but some things must be answered, tho not for their *real weight*, yet because of the *Noise* they make in the World; tho at best it is but like the sound of an empty Vessel; *Sonus, & pratera nihil.*

Secondly, I am afraid, Another thing which keeps some Persons from bringing their Children to the Church to be baptized, is *Riches* and *Greatness*; Such Persons look upon it as a piece of *State*, to have their Children baptized at home, and fancy that something more ought to be done for *them*, than for *poorer People*; Now I readily grant that there is a different *civil* respect due to men according to their *various* Degrees and Qualities, and so there is to *Friends* the same, and God forbid but in all *lawful* things, they should have it to the utmost Degrees in which 'tis due; (And that I may not be condemned neither of *Incivility* nor *Ingratitude*, which I naturally abhor, I here *publickly* profess, that I shall always look upon it, as my great *unhappiness*, that some of those whom I have been forced to deny in this matter, were of this Number) But it must be considered, that in matters of *absolute duty* (such as this is proved to be) all Persons are Equal, and in such cases there ought to be no *respect* of Persons; Rich and Great Persons are no more *above* their duty, than Poor and Mean men are *below* it; If it be a *Duty*, 'tis so to all alike; Even a Heathen *Pericles* could say, when his Friend desired him *to testify a Lye*; *I am your Friend as far as Honesty and a good Conscience will permit*; And I must take leave to say, that he is not a Friend, that desires more. And a Pagan Poet has taught us, that *Offences* are aggravated by the *Greatness* of the *Offender*; Riches and Greatness do not *lessen*, but *increase* Mens Obligations to Duty; These Blessings are a mighty trust, with which men may do a great deal of good, and for which Almighty God will demand a severer account than Ordinary. And such Persons should consider that their *Examples* are *visible* and *conspicuous*, and have a great *influence* upon those whom Providence has placed *below* them, and that therefore it becomes them to help to reform a *Custom* so undeniably *unlawful* by giving a *good* Example, and by leading the way to others, without which 'twill hardly be effected, the fault of which will one day lye at *their* doors.

* Μαρτυρῶν ἀδόξως.

Ἀχθε βαμῶ φίλος ἰμμὶ. Arch. Atticæ Lib. 3. cap. 3. *Hence the Prov.* Amicus usque ad Aras.

Omne animi vitium, &c. *Juven. Sat.* 8.

Thirdly, I do not well know what to call it, but another thing I have heard pretended, to put off this Duty, is to this Effect; All our Children hitherto have been baptized at home, we ne-

ver had *one* baptized at Church. Let it be remembred, that I have already proved this to be a *Duty*, and then the force of this *mighty* Objection amounts to *this*; We have hitherto done amiss all our Lives, and therefore we are resolved to do so still; We have never yet done our Duty, and therefore we never will. I will not expose the Folly of this pretence, it is enough to expose it self.

My Discourse has hitherto been in *General*; But now I must apply myself more *particularly* to you of my own Charge. You see what the plain Laws of the Church are in this respect, and what strong Obligations we *all* lye under to *obey* them; You see upon what great Strength of *Reason* and *Antiquity* those Laws of the Church are founded; Fathers and Councils, Abundance of the most eminent *Divines*, both *Ancient* and *Modern*, giving their Testimonies to them; After all which, I cannot but hope, that you will readily comply, with what is here so plainly proved to be your Duty.

I am very sensible of the great Tenderness both of *Infants* and of *Parents*, and therefore (tho I never yet heard of one Child that was injured by being brought to the Font) yet if your Children be at any time really weak and in danger of Death, if by any accident whatever it so fall out, that they cannot safely be brought to *Church*, do not by any means suffer them to dye *unbaptized*; The Church in those cases of Sickness and extreme Necessity, has provided a Form of *Private Baptism*, and *this* you may be assured, I will always be ready to administer, tho it were at *Midnight*. In this Office of *Private Baptism*, all that is *Essential* to the Sacrament is contained, and enough to secure the Salvation of the Child, tho it should die before the other Solemnities and Circumstances be performed in the *Church*. And therefore when Persons pretend a tender regard to the Weakness of the Child, to excuse the bringing of it to the Church, and yet will not be contented to have it baptized at home, by the Form which is composed for that purpose, and *sufficient* for the Child's Salvation; 'Tis evident, that *something else* is at the *Bottom*, and that 'tis not so much their *regard* to the Safety and Welfare of the *Infant*, as the *indulging* of their own Humor, that is the cause of this *Obstinacy*; for as for the *Child*, that is secured by the *Private*, as well as by the *Public* Form. But if it live, and recover, then the Rubrick advises that as soon as it is fit to be carried abroad, it be brought to the *Church* (not to be Baptized again, for that is done already) but that the *Congregation* may be certified of the Truth of the Baptism, before *privately* used, and that the

* See Dr. Comb. Disc. upon the whole Com. Prayer. p. 338. and the Rubrick for Private Baptism.

the *Covenant* may be *solemnly* entred into for it by the *Sureties*.

And do not think that this shall put you to any *double* Charge or Trouble; for if in case of Neceſſity I come to your Houſes, to baptize any ſick Child, I expect no manner of Company, nor the leaſt Proviſion in or any *Reward* from you; If you are Poor, I had rather you ſhould have ſomething from me.

My Readineſs to ſerve you in all other reſpects, and particularly to come to the meaneſt of your Houſes in caſe of Sickneſs; My deſpiſing preſent Intereſt, and dealing *impartially* with all Perſons alike in this affair, cannot but convince you (if any thing will) that I am acted in it by pure *Conviction*, and Principles of ſolid Reaſon; Nor ſhould any thing elſe in the world have ever prevailed with me, to refuſe any of your Requeſts in this matter; I deſire you to excuſe me *only* from this *Unlawful Cuſtom*, and in any thing elſe, the Pooreſt of you may command my Attendance. If *Liberty* of *Conſcience* (*that is*, a *Diſcharge* from complying with Laws) be thought *reaſonable* for *others*, all I deſire is a *Liberty* of *Obedience*, a *Liberty* to *obſerve*, and *obey* thoſe Laws, to which I have *ſubſcribed*, and which ſtand *unrepealed*; and 'twill be very *unreaſonable* to deny me this.

Whatever the Event be, I have *now* this ſatisfaction, that I have done all that in me lies, to reform a *bad Cuſtom*, which I thought to be my Duty; You ſee I have not refuſed it *moroſely*, without giving you any *reaſon* for ſo doing; but I have ventured that which is deareſt to me of any thing in the World, I mean my *Reputation*, to ſatisfy you, that this Practice ought to be amended. I believe I have ſtudied this buſineſs *more* than you, and may *modeſtly* be allowed to underſtand it better; which is no more than I will readily grant to you, in your *proper* Callings and Imployments.

I confeſs I ſhall never look upon my ſelf to be anſwered by an *angry Reflection*, or a *diſdainful Smile*; Scurrilous Railing and Reviling are things, which I have both *Charity* enough to *forgive*, and *Magnanimity* enough to *deſpiſe*. But if you can procure any one in the world to make a *ſolid* Anſwer to my Reaſons and Arguments, I promiſe you I will readily retract my miſtakes, and ſhall be glad by that means to be put into a capacity of obliging you in *this*, as well as in *other* things; For I am ſo far from thinking it any *real diſhonour*, that I know 'tis a *manly Generoſity*, and a *Chriſtian Vertue*, to change my opinion, upon the Evidence of better Reaſon; and that to perſiſt in an *Error* out of pure *Obſtinacy*

ſtinacy and *Stubbornneſs*, does neither become the *Ingenuity* of a Man, nor the *Religion* of a Chriſtian; And therefore, if *you* find the Arguments of this *Diſcourſe* are ſuch as cannot be *fairly* anſwered, Let me beg and beſeech you then, as you love your own Souls, not *wilfully* and *ſtubbornly* to reſiſt the Truth. Remember that *to him that knoweth to do good, in any inſtance of* Duty, *and yet doth it not, to him 'tis a Sin,* in the higheſt Degree, *Ja.* 4. 17.

I have now done with what I have to ſay of *Baptiſm*; But before I conclude, I cannot but take *this Opportunity* of leaving with you a brief Exhortation to the conſtant receiving of the *Sacrament of the Lords Supper*, a duty too much neglected amongſt you.

Conſider then I beſeech you, the Plainneſs, and the Poſitiveneſs of the *Command, Do this in remembrance of me.* And withal remember that the *Only way to enter into Life, is to keep the Commandments* in general, *this* as well as the *reſt*; and that Chriſt will one day *execute his Vengeance, on all that obey not the Laws of his Goſpel,* 2 Theſ. 1. 8. of which this is *one*, and of the *higheſt importance* too.

1. Conſider that is the Command of Chriſt your Soveraign Lord, who as your King and Supream Governor, has an *abſolute* right, and a juſt Claim to your *Univerſal* Obedience, nor can you deny it in any inſtance whatever, without the higheſt Injuſtice.

2. Conſider further, that 'tis the dying Command of *Jeſus* your Saviour and Redeemer, your *greateſt Friend*, and your *beſt Benefactor*; who ſtopt at no *Dangers*, nor declined any *Sufferings* to do you ſervice; who freely parted with his own deareſt and invaluable blood, to ranſom, and redeem your Souls; to purchaſe for you the pardon of your Sins, the Graces of Gods Spirit, and the immortal Joys of Heaven. Who was contented to undergo all the Malice of Men and Devils, *to be a man of ſorrows and acquainted with grief* through the whole Scene of his Life; to endure the greateſt Torments of Body, and Agonies of Mind; to ſweat and groan, to bleed and die, to deliver you from Eternal Death. 'Tis *this Jeſus* that commands you, to *do this in remembrance of him.*

So that here is both the higheſt *Authority* to *command*, and the greateſt *Love* in the world to *invite* your Obedience. Will you then diſobey a *King*, and a *Saviour* too, a *Soveraign Lord*, and a *Merciful Redeemer* at once? Alas! What unpardonable *Rebellion*, What

What ſcandalous *Ingratitude* is this? Bleſſed Jeſu! What return can be ſufficient, What thanks can be big enough for ſuch amazing Love? And yet it is no hard or difficult, but a very eaſy requital, that the Son of God expects from us, 'tis only that we frequently remember his dying Love, in that *Memorial Feaſt*, he has appointed for that purpoſe; that we there thankfully commemorate his Mercy, ſolemnly renew and ratify our Baptiſmal Vows and Engagements, and enter into a ſacred League of Peace, and Love and Charity with all the world. A poor return, God knows, this is, for ſo great a Mercy, and ſhall we yet refuſe to pay *this*?

3. Conſider that you are bound in *Intereſt*, as well as in duty, to pay a conſtant Attendance on this ſacred *Ordinance*. For 'tis the moſt likely means in the world to make all your Prayers ſucceſsful at the Throne of Grace, and to fetch down even *temporal* Bleſſings upon you; And 'tis the moſt probable means in the world to promote and advance your *everlaſting* well-being; to confirm and increaſe your *Faith*, to heighten your *Repentance*, to raiſe your *Sorrow* for Sin, and your Hatred againſt it; To inflame your *Love*, your *Praiſe* and *Gratitude* to God, and your crucified Saviour, and your *Charity* to all your Fellow-creatures; 'tis the beſt way to advance your *Hope*, to improve all your Graces, to make all your Sins give up the Ghoſt, and yield themſelves perfect Victims to a Redeemers conquering Love. In ſhort, the bleſſed Sacrament, to every devout and worthy Receiver is full of divine and heavenly Bleſſings; 'tis not only our *greateſt Duty*, but 'tis our *higheſt Priviledge* too.

What *Reaſons*, what *Pretences* then can be ſtrong enough to keep you from ſo ſacred and *advantageous* a Duty? You know what I have formerly ſaid at large to remove them all; There are two faults, that you may be guilty of in this affair; Either by a careleſs *refuſal* and *neglect* of this *bleſſed Sacrament*, or by an unworthy *abuſe* and *profanation* of it; by *unworthily* coming to it, or by *profanely* turning your backs upon it; Both theſe are Sins *equally* dangerous, and I beſeech you by all the Hopes of Heaven, and Fears of Hell to avoid both. I have formerly and often told you how this may be done; But if there be any Soul amongſt you that wants either farther *Inſtruction*, or *Satisfaction* in this matter, I once more earneſtly deſire and invite all ſuch to come to me for my private help and direction; Come freely and without ſcruple, the Pooreſt, the Meaneſt of you; By the Bleſſing of God, you

ſhall

ſhall not go away without the beſt Aſſiſtance and Incouragement I am able to give you.

And in order to the fitting your ſelves for the *Bleſſed Sacrament* I muſt beg and entreat you to lead pious and ſober, juſt and Chriſtian Lives. *Impenitence* and an obſtinate going on in Sin, is the only thing, that makes men unworthy of the Sacrament; A good man, a true ſincere penitent, who underſtands competently the Nature of the Sacrament, and is heartily reſolved to forſake all his paſt Sins, and to lead a new Life, ſuch a one is fit to come to the *Sacrament* at any time; And he who will not do this, is not fit to die, nor can he go to Heaven.

And to enable you to lead this pious Chriſtian Life, let me beſeech you often and daily upon your bended Knees, to petition Almighty God, for his *preventing*, *aſſiſting*, and *ſupporting* Grace. Morning and Evening at leaſt, let me deſire every Soul amongſt you to ſpend ſome little time in that divine and heavenly, that honorable, and advantageous duty of Prayer. You that have Families muſt pray with them; and teach your Children and Servants to live in the Fear of God; Inſtruct and *Catechize* them in the Principles of Religion as well as you are able, and ſend them to the *Church*, to be inſtructed better; As they grow up, you muſt warn them often of the baſeneſs and danger of Sin in general; of *Swearing* and *Curſing*, of *Drunkenneſs*, and *profaning the Lords day*, Vices to which Youth are *extreamly* addicted. Tell them of the Excellency of a pious, ſober, righteous Life, and of the glorious rewards that attend it; teach them by your *Example*, as well as by your *Inſtructions*; You will have the *Comfort* of it in this Life, and be *rewarded* for it in a better.

From the Prayers of the Church, I would deſire you never to be *wilfully* abſent; Come at the beginning, and behave your ſelves devoutly at them; And for your *Private* Devotion, I have here compoſed a ſhort Form, which I deſire all ſuch of you, as have not better helps at hand, to ſay daily, *humbly* and *devoutly* upon your Knees.

O God the Father of Heaven, have mercy upon me a miſerable Sinner! O thou God of Angels and men, the Creator and Preſerver of all the world, I have ſinned, I have ſinned againſt Heaven and againſt thee, I have been a ſtubborn and a rebellious Child, but do not thou, O Lord caſt off the bowels and compaſſions of a Father. I have perverted all the ends of my Creation, I have deſpiſed thy Authority, abuſed thy Mercy, and pro-

provoked thy Vengeance; But O thou, who willeſt not the Death of a Sinner, have Mercy upon me! For thy Names ſake pardon mine Iniquities for they are great; for thine own Mercies ſake, for thy dear Son's and my Saviours ſake, have pity upon me a miſerable Sinner.

O bleſſed Jeſus, the High-Prieſt, the Saviour and Redeemer of Souls, have Mercy upon me! Let thy Stripes and Wounds, thy Croſs and Paſſion, plead and intercede for me; By thine Agony and bloody Sweat, by all that thou didſt and ſufferedſt for Sinners, ſave and deliver me, in the hour of Death, and the day of Judgment; And ſuffer not, O holy Redeemer, my Soul, which is the purchaſe of thine own meritorious blood, to periſh.

O holy Spirit of Grace, the Sanctifier of all the Elect People of God, inſpire, I beſeech thee, into my Soul the Principles of an Univerſal Piety; Sanctify me throughout, in Body and Mind, in Heart, Will, and Affections; I am undone if thou leave me to my ſelf, follow me by thy motions, and awaken my Conſcience by thy bleſſed Suggeſtions, or I periſh for ever. Quicken and excite my languiſhing Vertues; Allure my hope by the glorious rewards of Obedience; Alarm my fear by the ſtedfaſt belief of a judgment to come; Affect my gratitude and love, by a deep ſence of the amazing mercies of my God and Saviour; and by all let me be led to a ſpeedy and vigorous Repentance, to ſuch a pious and godly, ſober and humble, juſt and charitable life, as becomes a Diſciple of the moſt holy Jeſus.

O God the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, three perſons, and one God! O holy and undivided Trinity, have mercy upon me a miſerable ſinner!

Glory be to thee, O God, for all the mercies I have received; Take me into thy Protection [this day] or [this night] and all that belong to me; Bleſs all my Civil, Spiritual, and Natural Parents, Relations and Governors; Reward all my Friends and Benefactors; Forgive and turn the hearts of my worſt and greateſt Enemies; Let thy Goſpel, and Truth, thy Peace and Salvation extend it ſelf to all the World; for the ſake of Jeſus my Saviour; In whoſe Name and Words, I further pray. Our Father, &c.

Canon

Canon 14.

ALL Miniſters ſhall obſerve the *Orders*, Rites and Ceremonies preſcribed in the Book of Common Prayer, —— without either *diminiſhing*, or adding any thing in the Matter or Form thereof.

Canon 38.

If any Miniſter after Subſcription, ſhall omit to uſe the Form of Prayer, or *any of the Orders* or Ceremonies preſcribed in the Communion-Book, Let him be ſuſpended: And if after a month he do not reform and ſubmit himſelf, Let him be Excommunicated: And then if he ſhall not ſubmit himſelf within the ſpace of another month, Let him be depoſed from the Miniſtry.

Canon 81.

There ſhall be a Font of Stone in every Church and Chapel where Baptiſm is to be adminiſtred. —— *In which only Font* the Miniſter ſhall Baptize *Publickly*: that is, no doubt, *with the Form of Publick Baptiſm.*

FINIS.